

1894-1895

A Girl's List Inheritances.

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A Girl's Fair Inheritance.

I. Her Dwelling.

It's delicious to be at home for good! How kind father is! Not in the jolly way he used to be kind in the holidays; but now he pays me little attentions, & speaks in the tone he always uses to ladies, especially to mother. A dear dear mother! It's really funny, the way she makes much of me. "Has Miss Probyn everything she wants, Bates?" she will say, in her

grand tone, as if I were a distinguished visitor. All the same, I don't feel different: I want to laugh, & say, "Can this little old woman be 9?" - not because my skirts are cut short; but because they have grown so impossibly long - the skirts of my dignity, I mean.

The oddest new thing is, the way I am left to myself. Nobody says, "Do this," "Don't do that." But people are polite & interested about whatever I do or say. I feel like a great heiress come into her fortune. I believe that is it. I have come into my inheritance. My friends are watching to see how I use it. "Ah, there's the rub!" I have my part to play; & it seems to me I must do it for myself & by myself. Well, I will "endeavour myself"; as the Prayer Book puts it.

No one can look after an inheritance who has not first taken stock of his possessions: so, to begin with the Dwelling. . . . It does mean this

I have spent ten minutes before the glass, & I am
not ashamed to write it down. You really, there was
no vanity in the exercise. I was only ^{curiously} taking stock
of my dwelling, 'the home I live in,' as a little
book of physiology ^{out of} I used to learn, was called.
Father has insisted that I should learn something
of physiology & the laws of health since I was quite
a little girl. "It's all nonsense to talk of health
as a blessing, & open your mouth to receive it;
health is a duty, which every child should be brought
up to fulfil." - is the sort of thing he is fond of saying.
~~It is to get the opportunity.~~ Another pet saying
of his is, "A serviceable body, & more pleasant to behold."
^{that is} ~~that is~~ parts of every man's duty to his neighbors; &
then he will enlarge upon the miseries & awkward,
blundering, fumbling folk he sees, whom they will
find their help in emergencies.

It is with these two sayings of father's in view
that I have been putting myself under critical survey -
my outside self, I mean. The result is satisfactory.
Some people are handicapped by gross physical defects
& overcome them in a wonderful way. Like Alice
Baker who, ~~though she~~ has no fingers on her right
hand, only a thumb, & yet can sew & write ~~quite~~
beautifully. And I have no such defect. Thank God,
& though I'm no beauty, perhaps I am, as Mrs.
Brandes used to say, "Wholesome & pleasant to
look at;" because I am healthy & happy. I
suppose.

A healthy body, a serviceable body, & more pleasant to
behold - that will close the present by way of a 'blue
teapot' - 'to live up to!' A healthy body, I think, but
how to keep it, is the question. Until now, I have

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been living by rules, a wise rule, framed with this end.

"I consider I have failed in the education of a girl whom I do not send out with a good, or, at any rate, a greatly improved physique;" - I heard Mrs. Brander remark to father. But now, I'm afraid I am my own mistress in this matter. It's well I know how to set about the duty. My education comes in here, though. Otherwise, it's rather sad to find how little I know. All the things which are too long to write, but I shall just put down a few rules: -

Mem: Must not lounge on sofa or easy chair for more than ten minutes, or so, at a time.

Must not sit down to a novel for more than half an hour, say, at a time, for the sake of eyes & nerves.

Must do an hour's intense vigorous study every day, not reading, but binding out, learning, writing papers, this, for several reasons; but, with regard to health, for the sake of keeping off all sorts of nervous disorders.

Must not eat too much, nor look out for nice things; nor allow myself more than one or two sweetmeats on one day.

Must brush my teeth after each meal; must not drink hot things; must wait, if possible, to drink until I am finished eating.

Such points as much open-air exercise, & daily bath, much rubbing, &c., I am not likely to forget.

A serviceable body: Hints: - "Throw perfection into all you do."

"Household notions light & free: -

"Endurance, force, strength, & skill: -

Mem: Must be no chance of helping in the house, when Mother or the Maids. Must learn, & get leave to practice

• practice every kind of housework. Must be ready for the children's misdeeds - burns, cuts, bruises. Must be no chance of parting a parcel, or doing a message. Must set about household duties briskly, cheerfully, quietly. Must bear aches & pains with a cheerful countenance. Must do one or two laborious letters every day to get strength of muscles. Must undertake one or two delicate tasks for the sake of learning skill. Must not let myself be clumsy.

Body pleasing to look at: Mem. Skin at all times must I clean. ~~Must attend to fingers & nails daily - to~~
~~many persons allow themselves to have hands not~~
~~quite clean~~ Must not begrudge the time spent in hair brushing. Wilberforce used to read the Psalm for the day while he was dressing. At the time he was busy about 'Emancipation'. I might do something of the kind. Must not allow myself in ungainly or slothful postures. There! No doubt there is much besides, but for the present, I shall aim at keeping these few rules in the management of my dwelling.

A Girl's Fair Inheritance.

II. Her Pleasures -

Out of the house, into the garden! It is but a step. Yet I am uncertain about taking that step. May I have a garden? And, if I ought, how large should it be? I how should I lay it out? Father says, "Every life should be large enough to include a pleasure-ground." That ought to settle the first question: I may have a garden; now to lay it out in lawns & flower-beds. But, first, I must set a hedge about it; or my pleasure-ground may spread over the whole estate. ~~That is a mistake we girls make. we are sure that pleasure is~~
~~lawful, & we give ourselves up to it.~~ No girl loses her head sooner than I; is, up with a boom clary, hard & fast; that I may make no blunder as to which is ploughed land & which play-ground.

First, pleasure should be re-creation; that makes, create us again when we are used up with work. I think I understand that, thanks to physiology lessons: some of our very substance wears away with real work, & neither of body & brain, we miss that has gone out-of-us, & feel languid & tired. Therefore, we must allow time for recreation; that is, ~~pleasantly~~, for new growth to replace that has

has been worn out, ~~four times~~. This new growth ^{at present} takes place very quickly; when we have made up our losses, & are ready for work again, we feel fresh as daisies & gay as larks.

I begin to see my way. Pleasures which recreate, which help nature to make good the waste caused by even a few hours' work, & leave us feeling bright & fresh, ~~now~~ are right & necessary as well as delightful. But there are pleasures of another sort, which, instead of recreating waste our substance - the substance of our bodies, & ~~in~~ ~~restless~~ ~~living~~ leaving us unable for the new day's work. These, I think, are not lawful pleasures, but dissipation.

~~A dissipation is only another word for waste.~~

Now, for the application: What pleasures shall I choose?
 Though, after all, we don't have much choice. Pleasures
 come to us without our seeking, and take what we feel &
 are bound to. Still, we can say, "No," or "Yes," to the
 offers we get; ^{so} much I mean to do. I see already
 that if a girl lays herself open to every pleasure - engagement
 people kindly put in her way, she may do nothing else. As
 has no time left to be her own mistress or her neighbor's
 servant; other last, I hope to be. I do want to "take service"
 as the poor people say, both at home & out.

servant; others last, sharp &c.
as the poor people say, both at home & abroad.
But how Evander! Let me sit down as
clearly as I can, the sort of pleasures I should
choose. I find it is a great help to have made
up your mind beforehand; when you give
people a plain reason for not doing as they wish
they are generally satisfied. At the same time, mother

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Says I must not be brusque in my refusal, must be careful not to give offence. ~~Somehow, but I will~~
~~firmness, the calls obstinacy! I wonder is it right?~~
~~Nothing is generally right!~~

Lawn tennis, of course: nothing can be better than free exercise in the open air. It is fortunate when the right thing is the thing you like. Now, who would keep a pleasure-ground under lock & key for his private use? My pleasures must be family pleasures & neighbourly pleasures. I must play with the children & with friends who happen to come in, must not let myself be drawn into sets of good players, tournaments, & that sort of thing. They used to say at school that I played well; but it does not do to be 'wild' about tennis; it takes up too much of one's time & thoughts. I wonder how it would do to pour upon callers - young people - for play, shuttlecock or Indian clubs in the hall in bad weather, tennis or cricket - when it is fit? I'm afraid I am a baby about play; but it really is, that I want to fit in, also, a good day's work every day. Perhaps a rule, not to begin play of any sort - till about four o'clock in the summer, would be useful. Studies household duties in the morning, needlework, drawing, & practising in the afternoon, besides whatever outside duties may come to me. One might get an hour or two for the new books in the evening, not novels, unless for halcyons after dinner. Country rambles with an object - or delicious. I shall begin at once to make a collection of

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of the wild flowers to be found about here; & shall teach
the children the little botany I know. So that we
may have grand expeditions, hunting for ficum
Ovens, fritillary, & all sorts of things. It would
not be a bad plan in winter to walk off to some
good point of view, & describe the scene afterwards
in writing: indeed, that is a good idea for all the
year round; & how nice it would be to have
written descriptions of the spots one cares most
for should one ever come to leave home! For
instance, I know a spot with three lovely birches,
just like Mr. McWhirter's 'Three Graces'; the
children might join in this too.

Summer amusements of the right kind are easily
arranged for; but what is to be said about the late
hours & the crowded, close, concert-halls & lecture-rooms
in the winter? Well, I suppose the mind must
have its recreation as well as the body, & new
ideas are a real refreshment. Dancing, too,
is capital exercise. But—dancing half the
night through in close rooms?—Most likely
father & mother will settle this difficulty ~~at~~
& say that I am not to go out to any look
of entertainment—more than one or two evenings
a week. And I must try to get a good
walk every day. V. B. must learn to skate this
winter if we get any ice.

Mum: must "endeavour myself" to devote my leisure
ground to such pastimes ~~as I can~~ as shall
bring health of body & refreshment of mind to myself & others.